

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 AID-05 IO-13
/084 W

-----044459 261326Z /43

O R 261236Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8764
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 5170

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AF
SUBJECT: "PURGE" OF ONE WING OF THE RULING PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY
OF AFGHANISTAN MAY BE UNDERWAY

1. SUMMARY. OVER THE LAST TWO DAYS, EVIDENCE HAS BEEN
ACCUMULATING THAT A PURGE OF BABRAK'S FACTION LEADERS IS
UNDERWAY. BABRAK HIMSELF HAS NOT BEEN SEEN OR MENTIONED IN
THE PRESS FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS AND IS RUMORED TO BE THE NEXT AMBASSADO
R

TO PRAGUE. NUR AHMAD NUR IS DEFINITELY IN LINE FOR AN
AMBASSADORSHIP, AS IS ALSO ABDUL WAKIL, THE FOREIGN MINISTER
SECRETARY GENERAL. RUMORS ALSO HAVE IT THAT SOCIAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER ANAHITA IS TO GO TO BELGRADE. END SUMMARY
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2. CHARGE WAS TOLD JUNE 25 BY DEPFONMIN SHAH MOHAMMAD DOST THAT
TWO MEMBERS OF THE FORMER PARCHAM WING OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA) WHICH WAS LED BY DEPUTY PRIME
MINISTER BABRAK KARMAL FROM 1967-1977, ARE ON THE
WAY OUT, AND AT LEAST ONE
IS ON HIS WAY TO AN AMBASSADORIAL POST ABROAD.

MINISTER OF INTERIOR NUR AHMAD NUR, A STAUNCH AND LONG-TIME BABRAK CONFIDANT, WILL DEFINITELY BE RELIEVED AND ASSIGNED TO A POST ABROAD. ABDUL WAKIL, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY (THE NUMBER TWO SLOT), HAS ALSO BEEN SACKED AND IS RUMORED TO BE THE NEXT AFGHAN AMBASSADOR TO THE COURT OF ST. JAMES. BABRAK HIMSELF HAS BEEN NOTICEABLY ABSENT FROM MEDIA REPORTING OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS, AND RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING THAT HE IS UNDER "HOUSE ARREST" WITHIN THE PALACE GROUNDS, AND THAT HE MAY BE THE NEXT ENVOY TO PRAGUE. HE DID NOT APPEAR AT SEVERAL RECENT FUNCTIONS WHERE HIS PRESENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.

3. COMMENT. SINCE THE APRIL 27 REVOLUTION, ONE OF THE MOST LIKELY SOURCES OF ANY SCHISM WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN THE TENSIONS CAUSED BY THE 1967-77 SPLIT BETWEEN THE PARCHAM AND KHALP WINGS OF THE PDPA, AND THE PERSONAL ANIMOSITIES WHICH REPORTEDLY REMAIN BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF THE TWO FACTIONS. DISPUTES OVER HOW PRO-SOVIET THE REGIME'S POLICIES SHOULD BE HAS ALSO BEEN A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF TROUBLE -- BABRAK AND THE PARCHAM WERE GENERALLY BELIEVED TO BE MORE ORTHODOX PRO-SOVIET THAN WERE PRIME MINISTER NOOR MOHAMMAD TARAKI AND HIS KHALQ COLLEAGUES. THESE COMPETING PRESSURES MAY HAVE COME TO A HEAD IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAST FEW DAYS, AS THE "EXILE" OF NUR AHMAD NUR CAN ONLY BE A POLITICAL MOVE SINCE HE IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MOST INTELLIGENT AND ABLE MEMBERS OF THE NEW CABINET. WAKIL, BY CONTRAST, WAS NOT QUALIFIED FOR HIS FOREIGN MINISTRY POSITION, AND WE BELIEVE HE WAS GIVEN THAT JOB IN ORDER TO "BALANCE" FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN, A LONG-TIME TARAKI MAN. HIS TRANSFER AT THIS POINT, THEREFORE, IS UNDOUBTEDLY ALSO A POLITICAL MOVE. THE TWO SACKINGS TOGETHER POINT TO THE START OF A "PURGE" AIMED AT FORMER PARCHAMISTS, ALTHOUGH ALL RETURNS ARE NOT YET IN.

4. BABRAK HAS NOT BEEN FEATURED IN THE PRESS IN THE LAST WEEK, AND, IN THIS REGARD, OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS CABINET MEMBERS WHO ARE KNOWN KHALQISTS HAVE BEEN PROMINENTLY FEATURED IN THE MEDIA. REMAINING KNOWN PARCHAMISTS IN THE CABINET ARE: SULAIMAN LAIQ, MINISTER OF RADIO AND TELEVISION; MOHAMMAD HASSAN BAREQ-SHAFEYE, MINISTER OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION; ANAHITA RATEBZAD, MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS (RUMORED TO GO TO BELGRADE); MAHMUD SOOMA, MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION; AND, NEZAMUDDIN TAHZEEB, MINISTER OF FRONTIER AFFAIRS.

THEIR FATES IN THE NEAR FUTURE SHOULD GIVE FURTHER INDICATION AS TO WHICH WAY THE WIND IS BLOWING WITHIN THE REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP, AND HOW FAR ANY ANTI-PARCHAM CAMPAIGN MAY BE CARRIED.

5. WHETHER THIS SORT OF "PURGE" COULD RESULT IN THE RESUMPTION OF VIOLENCE REMAINS TO BE SEEN, ALTHOUGH WE WOULD DOBUT IT. THE MILITARY IS HEADED BY CONFIRMED KHALQISTS -- DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER MAJOR WATANJAR AND DEFENSE MINISTER GENERAL QADER -- AND WE BELIEVE THAT TARAKI'S PRE-REVOLUTION RECRUITING EFFORTS IN THE AFGHAN ARMED FORCES WERE MUCH MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN WERE THOSE OF HIS PARCHAM RIVALS. ANY OVERT ACTIONS ON THE PART OF THE NUMEROUS
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SOVIET "ADVISERS" NOW IN THE COUNTRY PRESENT A QUESTION-MARK, BE WE CONSIDER IT UNLIKELY THAT MOSCOW WOULD TAKE SIDES IN ANY KIND OF FACTIONAL DISPUTE, EVEN THOUGH THE MORE PRO-SOVIET SIDE MIGHT BE "LOSING". IN THIS REGARD, THE LEFTIST CREDENTIALS OF TARAKI AND HIS SUPPORTERS APPEAR SUFFICIENTLY SOLID THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT FIND ANY DIFFICULTY WORKING WITH AND SUPPORTING A PDPA-LED REGIME, EVEN WITHOUT BABRAK AND COMPANY. MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS WERE REPORTEDLY INSTRUMENTAL IN ATTAINING THE 1977 REUNIFICATION OF THE TWO FACTIONS, AND AT THAT TIME ASSERTED THAT THERE WERE ONLY PERSONALITY NOT SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TOWINGS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RULING PARTY, REPORTS, GOVERNMENT REFORM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KABUL05170
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780264-0787
Format: TEL
From: KABUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780621/aaaaasaz.tel
Line Count: 150
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cd21ee7f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2212865
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: \"PURGE\" OF ONE WING OF THE RULING PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN MAY BE UNDERWAY
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cd21ee7f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014